

Survey on Ambulance Patient Compartment Safety

EMS practitioners riding in the back of ambulances are at high risk of suffering injuries during a crash or crash avoidance maneuver when not using restraints. However, using restraints makes it difficult to access and treat patients while en route to the hospital. Achieving a balance between practitioner safety and patient care is a significant challenge for the EMS community.

To address this challenge, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Human Factors and Behavioral Sciences Division (HFD) and the First Responders Resource Group (FRRG) has partnered with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to develop design guidance for ambulance patient compartments that address crashworthiness, EMS practitioner safety and performance, and patient safety. The guidance will provide crucial information for EMS organizations and ambulance manufacturers to design safer patient compartments that can help EMS practitioners optimize their ability to perform patient care. The guidance will be incorporated into current and emerging ambulance design standards such as NFPA 1917.

Please provide your input by completing an anonymous web survey. This survey is extremely important so that a wide cross-section of EMTs and paramedics can have their say in the development of the design guidelines. This survey will be available from November 28 through December 28, 2011. Access it via the NIST web site - www.nist.gov/oles or here on the RKB - www.rkb.us. **Please encourage all your colleagues to take the survey as well.**

If you have any questions or would like to participate further, please contact Darren Wilson at darren.wilson@dhs.gov or Jennifer Marshall at jennifer.marshall@nist.gov.